

Resource

Alternatives to calling the police

London Bi Pandas' have created a guide of alternatives to calling the police. It's pasted below:

Often white people have been brought up to believe that calling the police is the right thing to do in all kinds of situations. However, inviting the police into your neighbourhood, can often lead to escalation and puts marginalised groups, such as people of colour, at risk.

By thinking about why you feel the need to contact the police, developing your own skills around conflict resolution and educating yourself on what alternatives are available, you can minimise police interference in your area and avoid further endangering those who might be put at physical risk by their presence.

It's vital to deconstruct your beliefs about the police and why you should call them. There are so many resources, a fraction of which are linked below. Alongside articles, videos and training, you may also find [these meditations](#) useful.

In its resource, [Alternatives to Calling the Police](#), *The Unitarian Universalist Association* encourages people to consider why they're calling the police.

Do you need an official record of what's happened for insurance purposes or otherwise? There are alternative ways, such as photos, keeping written records, written and signed testimonies. Depending on the situation, there may also be other ways to keep a record. It's also helpful to consider what the outcomes would be if you don't file a report with the police? Are you seeking financial reimbursement for any damages? Weigh the potential harm of police presence against the financial impact of the incident that has occurred. Are there other ways this could be resolved?

If you decide you do need to interact with the police, there are ways you can minimise harm, including going to the police station instead of bringing police to your community, which

Policing Alternatives

Call your community

There are often situations where you may need someone's help but there's no reason why that needs to be the police when there are other options available. Setting up networks of friends who are able to arrive quickly and deescalate situations is a great place to start. This can be organised in advance. Similarly, you could operate a phone tree system where members of your local community can quickly be contacted to assist with an incident. Crisis response platforms like [Buoy](#) can also be used to connect you with others during emergency situations.

Do you actually need to take any action?

Factors such as race, gender, housing situation and class can impact your judgment on whether something is 'suspicious' and can be life threatening for those you accuse. Check your reaction and ask yourself whether any action is actually necessary. There are some things you do not need to involve yourself or the police in, such as witnessing urinating in public, harmless graffiti or damage to commercial property if no-one is being endangered.

Restorative / Transformative Justice

There are organisations around the UK practising this approach. They can be contacted to support with any kind of situation, no matter how serious. The process usually involves people affected by the incident meeting voluntarily with mediators, where they seek to understand what happened and why, sharing how they feel before developing a contract that everyone supports to ensure all concerns are addressed and the incident is prevented from recurring.

This process can serve to strengthen communities, allowing everyone involved to have their voices heard and understand how the wider community is impacted. US-based organisation, [Rose City Cop Watch](#), warns that some programmes function as auxiliaries to the police rather than alternatives so try to do your homework beforehand. This mixture of auxiliaries and alternatives is visible in this list of available service providers on the Restorative Justice Council's [website](#).

Alternative services

- **Mental Health Challenges / Suicide:** The police are known for their poor management of mental health challenged. Have a contact list of resources available, specific to your community. Don't make assumptions about seemingly 'odd' behaviour being a sign of intoxication. Instead, ask whether the person needs assistance.
- **Fire / Medical incidents:** These can often be handled without any police intervention.
- **Vehicle breakdown:** Ask whether the people involved need help or whether you can call anyone for them. Involving the police can mean punitive fines, questioning of immigration status and more.
- **Sexual violence:** Depending on how the victim would like to proceed, rape crisis centres provide a valuable service, mostly neglected by the state. Find your nearest rape crisis centre [here](#).
- **Noise disturbances:** Issues can be dealt with by getting to know your neighbours and communicating with them to establish a mutual understanding. Avoid approaching your neighbours when emotions are running high (in the middle of the night for example) and instead contact them the following day for a constructive conversation. Seeking the support of a mediator or impartial neighbour could be a next step, and if this is unsuccessful and further action is absolutely necessary, contacting your local council about a noise disturbance is preferable to the police.
- **Domestic violence:** The police can escalate domestic violence situations. Organisations such as [Women's Aid](#), [Stonewall](#) and [Galop](#) provide resources and support. You can also help someone who is being victimised by offering them a place to stay, a lift to a safe location or to babysit their children. You can also make use of shelters and helplines.

Preventative measures

There are numerous preventative measures that can be implemented to reduce the need for someone to call the police. Getting to know your neighbours is the first step towards building supportive relationships to confront issues. If you live in an area where you feel particularly unsafe, consider having a buddy system and taking steps like ensuring doors are locked etc.

As mentioned [here](#), "hold and attend deescalation, conflict resolution, first-aid, volunteer medic, and self-defense workshops in your neighborhood, school, workplace, or community organization." [This webinar](#) on Deescalation and Interventions is a helpful place to start, as well as the Audre Lorde Projects' [Safer Party Toolkit](#). Community fundraising for bystander intervention training or building [community defense zones](#) can be other ways to avoid involving the police.

Resources:

New Zine: 12 Things to do Instead of Calling the Cops:

<https://www.sproutdistro.com/2017/07/28/new-zine-12-things-cops/amp/?fbclid=IwAR0tuzd0d1HkgTe1K1VE5rzSyBSyg8XAky7NRnZaWkSj0niwtxJg8Odmomg>

Creative Interventions Toolkit: <http://www.creative-interventions.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CI-Toolkit-Complete-Pre-Release-Version-06.2012-.pdf>

The Audre Lorde Project's Safe Party Toolkit:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxlqoamGVS6IMV9oSy0zNGIYNEE/view>

Alternatives to Police by Rose City Copwatch:

<https://rosecitycopwatch.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/alternatives-to-police-draft.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2ChvJN7v4X9843EXypuYfoVsB6GUk6N8icZFY8NFkS9ZIW6Yle8l7vzp8>

A New Year's Resolution: Don't Call the Police: <https://truthout.org/articles/a-new-years-resolution-don-t-call-the-police/>

A short webinar on Deescalation and Interventions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwVN1Qw2wZA&feature=youtu.be>

Resisting Gender Violence without Cops or Prisons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qlozk7G-JYo>

Ten Lessons for Creating Safety Without Police: <https://truthout.org/articles/10-lessons-for-creating-safety-without-the-police-a-reflection-on-the-10-year-anniversary-of-the-sos-collective/>

Some more resources on transformative justice:

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/transformative-justice-explained>

<https://transformharm.org/transformative-justice-a-brief-description/>